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ABSTRACT

This report contains three sections, the first of which is an introduction. This section states that the purpose of this report was to assess the initial group of projects sponsored under Public Act 761 of the General Assembly of Connecticut, and to weigh the broader implications of the rationale underlying the Act. It is explained in this section that the Act applies to both prospective and probationary teachers, and places emphasis upon the clinical experience, the proposed collaboration between training colleges and school systems, and the target area of the disadvantaged. It also states that the bill calls for continuous and cooperative supervision of student teachers, workshops for those who are to assume supervisory duties, and reduced loads for supervisors. Section two of this report presents a series of nine themes or generalizations that represent the major highlights of the program to date. Each theme is discussed and criticisms are given. Section three contains the evaluators' recommendations. They present 10 recommendations that they hope will further and strengthen the legislation. (RC)

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INNOVATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION:

A Report to the Connecticut Commission for Higher Education appraising eight pilot projects sponsored by Public Act 761

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY
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February 27, 1969

Mr. Donald H. McGannon, Chairman
Connecticut Commission for Higher Education
Post Office Box 1320
Hartford, Connecticut

Dear Mr. McGannon:

I am pleased to forward this report pertaining to Public Act 761.

As you know, the members of the evaluation team included: Professor Ralph L. Mosher; Dr. David E. Purpel (Chairman); Mr. Charles H. Rathbone; and Dr. Richard H. Weller.

We found the experience to be professionally rewarding and personally satisfying. We congratulate the General Assembly, the State Department of Education, the Commission for Higher Education, its staff, and the participating members of the projects for their efforts to improve teacher education. We thank those who assisted us in this evaluation for their cooperation and for their personal kindness.

The report indicates that the legislature has provided vital opportunities for improvement of teacher education in Connecticut. With further development, additional opportunities for the improvement of teacher education are in the offing for Connecticut, to the ultimate benefit of students in schools of the state.

Sincerely,

David E. Purpel

David E. Purpel,
Chairman

For the Evaluation Team

DEP/vd

SECTION ONE: Introduction

I. The Assignment

Through enactment of Public Act 761 of the 1967 General Assembly, Connecticut has taken a bold and significant step toward improving the quality of teacher education within the state. The Commission for Higher Education asked us to assess eight pilot projects in teacher education, and to reflect on the basic policies established by this law. We agree with this two-fold responsibility, for we feel it is impossible to evaluate the individual projects without taking into account the context out of which they have evolved. We would wish to add that one cannot consider that context without acknowledging the impressiveness of this remarkable piece of legislation. From our vantage point, the meaning of the law seems clear: Connecticut has acknowledged its right and accepted its responsibility for up-grading the quality of teacher education wherever it occurs within the state.

The evaluation team has construed its task broadly: on the one hand we wish to assess the initial group of projects sponsored under this legislation in a way which will prove valuable to the Commission as it determines future involvement in this area; on the

other hand, we intend to weigh the broader implications of the rationale underlying 761.

Reading the Act, especially in the light of the Commission for Higher Education's 1967 Report to the General Assembly, Teacher Education in Connecticut, we note the establishment of a number of priorities. Among these are an emphasis upon the clinical experience, the proposed collaboration between training colleges and school systems, and the target area of the "disadvantaged." The bill also calls for continuous and cooperative supervision of student teachers, workshops for those who are to assume supervisory duties, and reduced loads for supervisors. The Act applies to both prospective and probationary teachers. In making evaluation of projects sponsored by this bill, we have taken these priorities into account; indeed, much of our assessment has dealt with the degree to which these objectives have been realized.

Although we recognize the opportunities Public Act 761 allows, we also acknowledge that no one of these pilot projects can be expected to evolve a completely satisfactory and generalizable answer to the difficult problems facing teacher education. Teacher education is a very complex business; it knows few simple answers. The issues these projects have addressed are both real and difficult. In college-sponsored Education courses a gap does exist between theory and

practice; white, middle-class student teachers do have a difficult time relating to the needs of inner-city children of different racial, cultural and economic backgrounds; the short-term, single-step introduction of student teachers into the profession can make the clinical training experience a veritable pressure-cooker. These are the difficult realities such projects face: to expect miraculous solutions is unfair and unrealistic. Furthermore, it should be openly acknowledged that evaluation in teacher education is particularly difficult. It is not as though we were dealing with an assembly-line process in which a clear relationship exists between "treatment" or "preparation" and a resulting product. Teacher education is ultimately concerned with a product that is not the college senior at graduation time, but rather the full-fledged professional at work in the field two , five and ten years hence.

For these reasons the task of evaluating such projects is not an easy one. We are dealing with a situation which involves the growth and development of whole people, not simply the training in some easily identified behavioral skill. Another constraint has also been operating: these projects are for the most part in their infancy. Many at the time of the November interim reports were barely underway and aspects of several projects did not begin operation until the second semester of academic 1968-69.

II. Procedures

In making our assessment, we first reviewed (1) Public Act 761; (2) the Academy for Educational Development's study, Teacher Education: An Urgent Matter, and (3) the Commission for Higher Education's Report, Teacher Education in Connecticut. Following our review of these documents, we subjected each of the eight original proposals to close line-by-line scrutiny. Our intention was to make a critical evaluation of the concepts within each proposal, testing them for logical consistency, degree of imagination, and basic soundness. Following this, we read the interim reports which described the implementation achieved by November first.

A second phase of assessment took place in Hartford on January 31 and February 1. There the evaluation team met with representatives from each of the projects, one representative from the cooperating school system, and one from the cooperating college or university. Interviews lasted two hours each, two in the morning and two in the afternoon. Members of the Commission staff and members of the Commission's Sub-Committee on Teacher Education joined both morning and afternoon groups in a luncheon meeting for a general discussion of the thrust of Public Act 761. Dr. Warren Hill and Dr. Louis Rabineau, the Director and Associate Director of the Commission

for Higher Education were on hand both days: the Commissioner, Mr. Sanders, met informally with the team on January 30. Participants in the two-hour interviews included: from Central Connecticut State College, Mrs. Dolores Graham and from the Barnard-Brown Elementary School in Hartford, Mrs. Rita Cohn; from Eastern Connecticut State College, Dr. Robert Wickware and from Wethersfield Public Schools, Miss Doreen Gamba; from St. Joseph College, Dr. Harriette Martire and from the Hartford Public Schools, Mr. Charles Boornazian; from Southern Connecticut State College, Dr. Helen Rakietan and from the New Haven Public Schools, Mr. Charles Twyman; from the University of Bridgeport. Dr. Harry Seymour and from the Bridgeport Public Schools, Mr. Richard Mayer; from the University of Connecticut, Dr. Colvin Ross and from the Groton Public Schools, Mr. Harrison Day; from Wesleyan University, Dr. Morton Briggs and Dr. Geraldine Murphy and from the Glastonbury Public Schools, Miss Judy Hession; from Western Connecticut State College, Mr. Donald Hoffman and from the Danbury Public Schools, Mr. Hollis Whitman.

It should be noted that we found these interviews extremely helpful in our evaluation: participants were candid in discussing operational problems and willing to discuss conceptual difficulties.

In some cases, we determined it necessary to make on-site visits to the projects because we deemed it important to observe certain elements within the projects in action. In all, representatives of the evaluation team conducted on-site interviews at four of the projects: Central Connecticut-Hartford, Southern Connecticut-New Haven, Wesleyan-North Haven, and University of Connecticut-Groton. With regard to reporting our findings, this evaluation team has already met with members of the Commission for Higher Education's Committee on Teacher Education and with the Advisory Council for Implementation of Public Act 761, and has made an informal oral presentation to both. This took place in the Commission offices on the evening of February 17. The present document, a more formal report, is comprised of three sections. This Introduction is followed by General Reactions and concludes with a list of Recommendations.

In addition to the informal oral presentation and this formal written report, we shall also in a letter to the director of the Commission for Higher Education forward our working notes on the eight individual projects. These notes may prove helpful to the Commission and its staff as they prepare for future projects of this sort.

Our basic belief is that Public Act 761 is a remarkable and constructive piece of legislation that clearly deserves continued and

strengthened support. The reactions we offer in Section Two and the recommendations we suggest in Section Three should be read with this understanding.

SECTION TWO: General Reactions

In this section we present a series of nine themes or generalizations that to us represent the major highlights of the program to date. These themes emerged as we sifted and analyzed our reactions to what we had examined. It is hoped that this organization will provide the reader with an accurate picture of how we view the operation of Public Act 761.

By way of introduction to these themes, we feel it proper to state our conviction that in general the projects seem solid and worthwhile. Our criticisms are not directed towards the goals of the law nor do they represent a "rejection" of the proposals. Rather, they are intended to clarify the relationship among the goals of law, the Act itself, and the specific projects. It is hoped that our analysis will be of use in the future development of the law and its implementation.

I. The Degree and Quality of Innovation in the Project

Public Act 761 was designed to encourage pilot projects both for the strengthening of existing programs and for the generation of innovation in teacher education. We found that the major emphasis in the projects was more on the strengthening of existing programs for clinical training than on the generation of basic change in that training. Because of our conviction of what is needed in teacher education, we hope that future projects under Public Act 761 will have fresher and bolder approaches.

Certain projects do give evidence of definite innovative thought, particularly when compared with existing programs at the sponsoring institutions. This is encouraging and evidence that Public Act 761 has had a catalytic impact. We question whether in some instances these ideas have been sufficiently examined or elaborated. For example, several projects have proposed "sensitivity training" for inexperienced teachers. We believe this is a potentially powerful idea, but we found insufficient attention given to its development or translation into practice.

In some instances the full power of the idea was limited by insufficient personnel or by a commitment to too many innovative ideas at once (for example, a concurrent use of "sensitivity training,"

teaming, interaction analysis, and video taping). All of these are powerful and complex ideas which require full understanding, sufficient personnel, and time to be properly implemented.

II. The Nature and Quality of Clinical Training

Public Act 761 focuses on clinical training in teacher education. In this respect it concentrates on the gap between theory and practice which has so long bedeviled educators. This gap obviously exists, it is a serious problem, and the innovations represented here are helping to close that gap. Some programs have intensified the clinical experience, some have extended it, and some have added different types of experiences. Yet we feel that the changes are still relatively traditional. A valid clinical experience allows the trainee to apply what he has learned, makes his current study relevant to real educational problems, and leads him to ask questions for future study. The clinical experience should therefore be genuinely integrated with the entire course of academic study -- additions or alterations in the final stages of a teacher's education are simply not enough.

There are aspects of clinical training with which future projects might deal. For example, we feel that the giving of an academic grade to such experiences causes severe problems. We also believe

that many types of experiences other than standard classroom teaching can justifiably be included in teacher education. Yet in these projects there has been virtually no credit or significant recognition given to such activities as working with youth groups, working with Upward Bound, hospital work, or reformatory work. Some projects have involved novices with local communities in order to broaden the experience of the teachers who are working in those areas. However, involvement with a community for the purpose of understanding implies involvement with all its aspects, not just the conventionally acceptable elements. This means contact with pleasant and unpleasant, conventional and radical.

III. Teacher Training and the Conventional Classroom

We believe it important to recognize that pupils receive much of their education outside of the classroom, in contact with individuals other than teachers, in areas other than the traditional subject matter of the school, and possibly in quite different modes than are conceived of in our present school organizations. All the projects reflect a traditional concept of education, which sees learning occuring only in conventional classrooms with fairly standard arrangements of courses, teachers, and pupils. We believe that "non-school" or

"extra-school" modes of education should at least be examined as possible places for study and involvement in teacher education. For example, the training of teachers for Street Academies or Store-front Academies would seem to be an appropriate area for involvement under the sponsorship of Public Act 761.

We are also concerned with the distinction between teacher training and teacher education. These projects deal with teacher training, in that the emphasis is on preparation for a very specific task and role. We see the education of a teacher as embracing a wider range of concerns: the nature of education, the nature of children, curriculum questions, etc.

IV. School-college-community relationships

Another general issue concerns the relationship between the schools and colleges sponsoring these proposals. The eight projects funded under Public Act 761 were indeed jointly prepared and executed by teacher training institutions and local boards of education. However, the projects appear to be primarily university-based in power, influence, and ideas. Schools and school personnel have indeed been involved, often in innovative ways, but in general the schools have not had the impact we believe they should have had on the design or

the execution of these proposals. We believe that such school initiative should be actively encouraged, funded, and provided with consulting assistance. What we have said about initiative from the schools we intend also to apply to the communities. Parallel initiative from the community should be actively encouraged.

V. Supervision of Probationary Teachers

Although the report of the Commission for Higher Education recommended strong clinical experiences for prospective teachers and continuous clinical supervision of new teachers during the probationary years, the projects deal primarily with pre-service clinical experiences and teacher training. The problems of first-year teachers, widely recognized as very serious and difficult, are quite different from those of student teachers. We believe that the State of Connecticut should actively encourage school systems, communities, and individuals to submit proposals for innovations in in-service training, particularly with respect to probationary teachers. The problem of supervising the probationary teacher is particularly acute and is an example of an area where school initiative should be actively solicited.

VI. The Training of Supervisors

A fundamental difficulty confronting any proposal for the improvement of teacher education is the need for quality trained personnel. It would appear that no matter how imaginative the idea or complex the machinery for its implementation, the key person in the training of teachers is the individual supervisor. We tend to believe it is the local supervisor whose intimate, continual, and experienced contact with the novice will ultimately be most influential in his preparation for practice. The identification, training, and nurturing of such supervisors both for pre-service and in-service teacher training is one of the most fundamental problems in teacher education. These projects should have given much more thought, money, time and energy to this purpose. Financial compensation and reduction of teaching load are necessary but <u>not</u> <u>sufficient</u> for quality supervision. Equally crucial is the need for the recruitment and training of supervisors with the ability in the analysis of curriculum and teaching.

VII. Recruitment

Although Public Act 761 was designed primarily to help produce better teachers for Connecticut in the years ahead, none of these projects attempt to recruit different people into education. The bill did

not confront the issue of attracting different people into teaching and consequently these programs assumed the existing personnel inflow. Some projects seem to be doing an excellent job of encouraging prospective teachers to change their orientation, as from suburban teaching to urban teaching. Imaginative programs of recruitment and training for individuals with non-conventional interests or capabilities are needed. Many of these projects might be totally based within the schools themselves. Connecticut might have national impact by encouraging brief, intense, school-based programs for black mothers to work in urban elementary schools, businessmen who wish to change professions, mothers who have finished raising their children, professional and skilled laborers who wish to use their talents in education, and individuals who have much to offer school children in fields other than the standard disciplines.

VIII. Evaluation of the Projects

It is reasonable and valid to require project directors to provide evaluations of their various projects. In so doing, however, they face a difficult and perennial problem, since measuring such subtle processes as are involved in teacher education has not yet been mastered by the experts. We feel there are dangers in over-measuring,

just as there are in under-measuring. This whole issue has not been confronted in these projects. We find a tendency either for unsupported claims or for "single-instrument" assessment. We believe that a careful, intense, hard-headed clinical analysis of these projects by outside personnel is probably as useful a means as any now available.

IX. Emphasis on the Disadvantaged

In keeping with the intent of the law, most of these projects concentrate on the urban disadvantaged. Several projects have noted an increased interest in the inner-city on the part of student teachers and this seems to be a direct result of the innovations; other institutions indicate that changes in their teacher education programs are in the offing as a result of the projects. The indirect effects of direct contact with and reflection upon urban problems may result in permanent changes in the students, whether or not they can be measured.

In summary, the evaluation committee believes that Public Act 761 is a pioneering effort of national significance. We believe that it should be renewed and greatly expanded in the future. The analysis and recommendations contained in this report should be understood in the light of our conviction that the substance and rationale of

Public Act 761 are far too important to be accepted with uncritical praise. The very concept of the law deserves better than that, and the comments in this report are intended to be more of a challenge for the future than a commentary on the past.

SECTION THREE : Recommendations

A number of our recommendations are implicit in the preceding discussion. The suggestions that follow are to be understood in the context of our general analysis of the pilot projects and our endorsement of Public Act 761. The recommendations are also offered in a particular spirit, and that is to strengthen the objective and the effect of a piece of legislation which we consider to be of great importance for teacher education in Connecticut and in the country at large.

1 Our first recommendation has to do with Public Act 761 itself. We urge reaffirmation of the goals of the law and a significant increase in its funding. Currently it focuses on clinical training. We suggest a broader law that would permit support for additional aspects of teacher education -- for example, in liberal arts education, in training for curriculum development, in training for educational technology and media and in preparation for work with disadvantaged children or with the community. The point is that teacher training priorities and interests change over time. We believe that the Commission and the State Board of Education should be given legislative authority to change such priorities and guidelines. The General Assembly has

been correct in identifying the urgent need to innovate in the clinical training of teachers; the need for innovation in other aspects of teacher education is equally critical.

2 We recommend that the law, and the Commission, support both innovative programs as well as subsidize established or ongoing projects of clear merit. The Commission should determine the proportion of money allocated both to innovative and to established programs.

3 We recommend the establishment of other mechanisms for stimulating innovative thinking and programs both with regard to clinical training and teacher education. We refer to techniques such as special state-wide conferences on these topics, visits to innovative programs outside Connecticut, and the use of consultants.

4 Given the present concern of Public Act 761 (i.e., with clinical training), we recommend that a major emphasis be given by the Commission to projects which develop teacher educators rather than exclusively teachers per se. Supervisors -- personnel with competency and training in curriculum development and supervision -- are the sine qua non of quality student teaching or in-service programs. The Connecticut T.T.T. (Trainers of Teachers of Teachers) Project offers

hope for productive federal, state and school cooperation in programs to develop curriculum and instructional leadership, but more such projects are needed. *

5 We recommend support for projects which will recruit new personnel into teaching. The projects to date assume the existing personnel inflow. Institutions should be encouraged, for example, to recruit and train teacher aides, community or minority group members, married women, or personnel like those attracted to the Teacher Corps.

6 We recommend that, in addition to colleges, schools, communities, and individuals be encouraged to initiate and submit proposals. Neither school systems nor communities appear to have taken important initiative in the teacher training projects to date. The school and the community must be heard; in the present climate of concern for

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* For example, we recommend that the Commission support a major summer training institute to develop a cadre of master teachers for one or more of the major cities. This institute probably should be directed by the city, but should substantially involve faculty from the large number of colleges which train student teachers in the city. School systems appear to have had very nominal initiative or imprint on these teacher training projects. The development of such an institute would be a significant test of the commitment and ability of a large city system (and a number of colleges) to do something really significant about producing crucially needed master teachers for pre- and in-service teacher education.

decentralization and community control of the city schools, this seems particularly imperative. The inclusion of school and community personnel in the development of proposals and at conferences such as suggested in recommendation 3 are two concrete steps which could be taken.

7 We recommend a broader interpretation of "disadvantaged" in the focus of the projects. For example, the children of the rural poor and the emotionally-disturbed are signally disadvantaged educationally.

8 We recommend that the Commission make consulting services available at several stages: in the development of proposals; in the evaluation of proposals prior to funding; and in the on-going implementation and evaluation of funded projects.

9 We recommend that guidelines be distributed in sufficient time for the preparation of proposals and that funding be available in sufficient time for planning and implementation.

10 We recommend that the Commission publicize pertinent findings

of the various projects as Public Act 761 continues in effect. Such dissemination of ideas is needed both in order to stimulate ideas and to allow institutions to learn from the successes and failures of others.

In conclusion, we feel it proper to reiterate our basic and enthusiastic support for the goals embodied in Public Act 761. Our analysis and recommendations are offered in the hope that they will further and strengthen this remarkable example of legislative leadership.